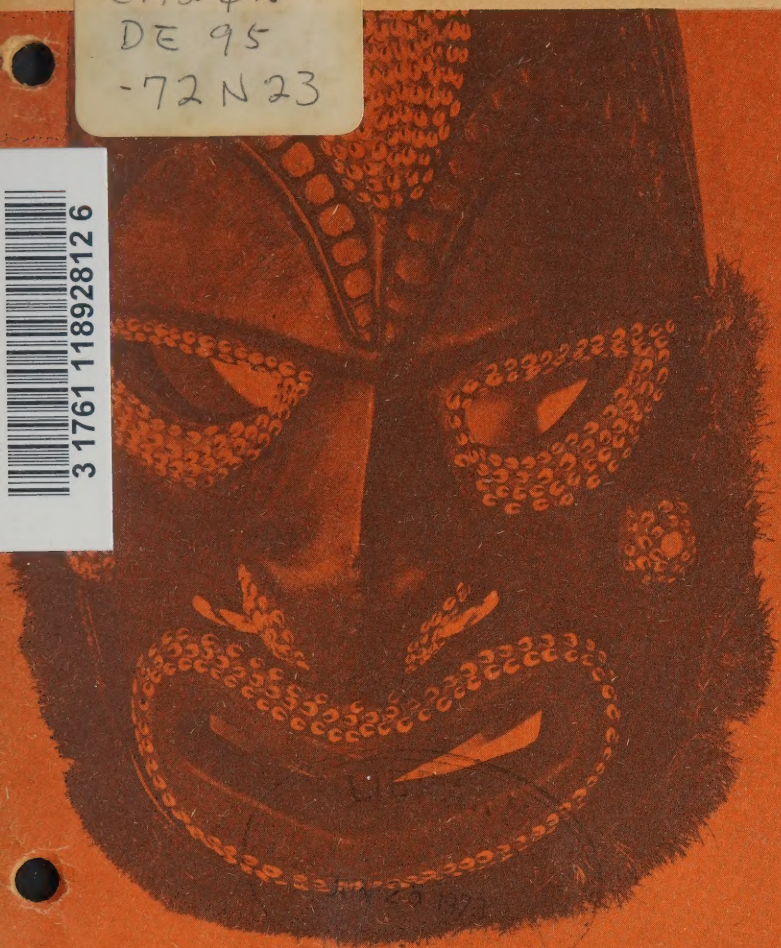


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Nouvelle-Guinée: mosaïque

"Chaque homme, écrit Chateaubriand, porte en lui un monde composé de tout ce qu'il a vu et aimé, et où il rentre sans cesse, alors même qu'il parcourt et semble habiter un monde étranger." Ces masques, sculptures et dessins nous semblent étranges à première vue, mais ils palpitent chacun d'une charge surnaturelle, d'une vision onirique de l'homme et de la femme que nous sommes toujours. Pas qu'une étude ethnologique soit facile et immédiatement accessible à nos sens et à notre entendement. Lévi-Strauss le sous-entend en écrivant: "Amazone, chère Amazone vous qui n'avez pas de sein droit, vous nous en racontez des bonnes mais vos chemins sont trop étroits."

Pour l'Asmat, l'homme est comme un arbre:
Ses jambes sont les racines,
Son torse, le tronc,
Ses bras, les branches et
Sa tête, le fruit.
Ainsi que l'Asmat qui fait un avec
l'arbre, nous faisons un avec l'Asmat:
"to become conscious of ourselves as
a body is to become conscious of man-
kind as one".
N.O.Brown

Combien semblables, et cependant
combien différents nous sommes de
ces hommes et femmes de la Nouvelle-
Guinée. Les *occidentaux* cherchent
quatre messages essentiels, quatre
moments historiques:

1. Oracle grec: connais-toi toi-même
et tu connaîtras l'univers.
2. "Aime ton prochain, c'est-à-dire non
seulement un autre Juif mais tout
homme créé par Dieu, comme toi-
même," dit le Christ.
3. "Je pense, donc je suis", dit
Descartes.
4. "L'énergie qui fait mouvoir l'univers
gît aussi dans l'atôme", dit Einstein.

Et les *indigènes*, "dans un désordre
joyeux, ont le sentiment de jouer avec
les morts et de gagner sur eux le droit
de rester en vie." Lévi-Strauss

De la conception la croissance,
De la croissance le gonflement,
Du gonflement la pensée,
De la pensée la mémoire,
De la mémoire la conscience, le désir.
Chant maori

Mosaïque d'un peuple, mosaïque de
réflexions culturelles et anthropo-
logiques, ce guide illustre une série de
dix émissions de 8 minutes créées en
faisant revivre avec toute leur charge
de surnaturel soixante-dix objets
culturels de la Nouvelle-Guinée
orientale.

New Guinea: Mosaic

is a series of ten 8-minute programs
produced with the assistance of the
Royal Ontario Museum which lately
exhibited, under the title Big Man
Island, almost 200 objects representing
regions of the eastern half of New
Guinea and adjacent islands. The
following introductory notes are taken
from the pamphlet accompanying the
exhibit. This background information
follows approximately the order of the
ten programs.

Asmat Region

The Asmat ventured from their swampy
terrain for trade and warfare. They
needed stone for axes, bamboo for
water bottles, and heads of enemies –
important for prestige or initiating
young men into adulthood. Their own
region supplied them with sago for food
and wood for daily and ritual items.
Each village tended to be autonomous
under the direction of the dominant
males or "big men" of the village, but
alliances were sometimes formed for
ceremonies and warfare. Situated near
the river bank in each village was the
men's ceremonial house. Rituals and
carvings often were memorials to
ancestors.

Papuan Gulf Region

Religious life was centred in the men's
enormous ceremonial house of each
village. Here, complex rituals taking
years to complete were held, in which
spirits were impersonated using
elaborate masks and ritual items.
Young men also were initiated into the
realm of the supernatural. Day to day
life varied according to district and
peoples, for this area included such
groups as the Kiwai, Namau, Elema
and Motu. People of the Gulf-head
depended on sago; those around Port
Moresby traded for food but sometimes
hunted wallaby. On the west side, root
crops were raised, supplemented by
hunting, and the coastal peoples added
fish, turtles, and dugong to their diet.
The Motu on the east side of the Gulf
were traders who each year travelled to
the Gulf-head to exchange their pots
for sago.

Massim Region

Trade, both practical and ceremonial,
was extensive. Goods moved in a kind
of circle, with ceremonial bracelets
travelling in one direction and neck-
laces in the other. Many items such as
canoes, carved figures, adze blades,
sago and pottery moved in various
directions. There was no men's house
in the Massim villages. The main struc-
ture was the yam house and rituals
were usually associated with growing
yams and trade. Observances tended
to be individual and there were no
masked performances. Villages usually
were autonomous, although the
Trobriand Islanders were an exception
where a hierarchical organization
unified groups of villages. A paramount
chief ruled a large region and sub-
sections were each governed by lesser
chiefs.

Maprik Region

The people in the mountains to the
north of the Sepik Valley lived in
villages strung out along the crest of
narrow ridges and linked by foot paths.
The Yam Festival was a major event
each year and a large harvest meant
prestige to the grower and the appease-
ment of the yam spirits. Once dug, the
yams were displayed on a ceremonial
ground within the village and often
decorated with wicker masks. Related
to the yam ceremonial complex was the
men's house, known as the Tamberan
which contained carved figures repre-
senting spirit beings or ancestors. Men
(who dominated all New Guinea
societies) met here to discuss ritual
matters.

Sepik Region

Although Sepik area masks and other
artifacts are sold in art galleries
throughout the world, anthropologists
still know very little of specific cultures.
It has been observed that often their
villages clustered on river banks, that
they navigated the waterways by dug-
out canoes, and that they depended on
fish and horticulture for food. Observers
have noted that the Naven ceremony
initiated young men into society and
enhanced the prestige of the man who
gave the ceremony.

Highland Region

Until recently, the peoples of the rugged hinterland were unknown to the western world. Ironically, their main food was the sweet potato which was introduced from the New World into New Guinea even before the arrival of the explorers. Ceremonies revolved largely around trade and pig festivals at which large numbers of pigs were slaughtered and the meat distributed. The Highland peoples had two types of settlements. In the west they lived in isolated homesteads scattered throughout the countryside. In the eastern part, the homesteads were grouped in fortified villages. Clan systems existed but power was in the hands of the "big man" who achieved his position through charisma and superior ability in warfare and ritual.

New Britain and New Ireland

Although the two islands differ somewhat, they are still within the pattern of Melanesian culture. Separating New Britain from the mainland is Vitiaz Strait, an active trading area which is linked to the interior of New Guinea and west to the mouth of the Sepik River through complex trade relationships. Commodities included dogs' teeth, dogs, pigs, pottery, wooden bowls, and sago. Charismatic leaders governed scattered villages. Rituals, too were exceedingly complex, especially in New Ireland where the malagan ceremonial cycle was performed. It was offered as a memorial to the dead and called for elaborately carved and painted ancestral figures and plaques which were erected on a special ceremonial ground for the performance.

New Guinea Today

In the last 100 years, the way of life of the people of New Guinea has been profoundly altered. Today they are becoming parliamentarians, lumbermen and ranchers and entering other Western professions. The old rituals and ceremonies have lost their meaning although some are continued. Modern cities such as Port Moresby and Rabaul are flourishing with schools, hospitals, law courts and universities.

At the ROM Shop, you will find *New Guinea: Big Man Island*, an exciting 260-page book with 100 photos and eight colour plates. It was written by E.S. Rogers, Curator of the ROM's Ethnology Department.

We wish to thank the ROM for their permission to reprint the photographs, map and introductory notes found in this guide.

Description géographique

Située immédiatement au sud de l'équateur, au nord du continent australien, la Nouvelle-Guinée est après le Groënland la plus grande île du globe.

Son *peuple*, contrairement à la plupart de ceux qui habitent le monde océanien, semble avoir relevé le défi de l'invasion matérialiste et demeure imprégné de craintes, de charmes et d'exotisme.

Dans cette *jungle* dense et impitoyable l'homme et la bête se disputent implacablement le droit de survivre. Enchevêtré parmi la faune tropicale jaillit tout un univers de civilisations primitives.

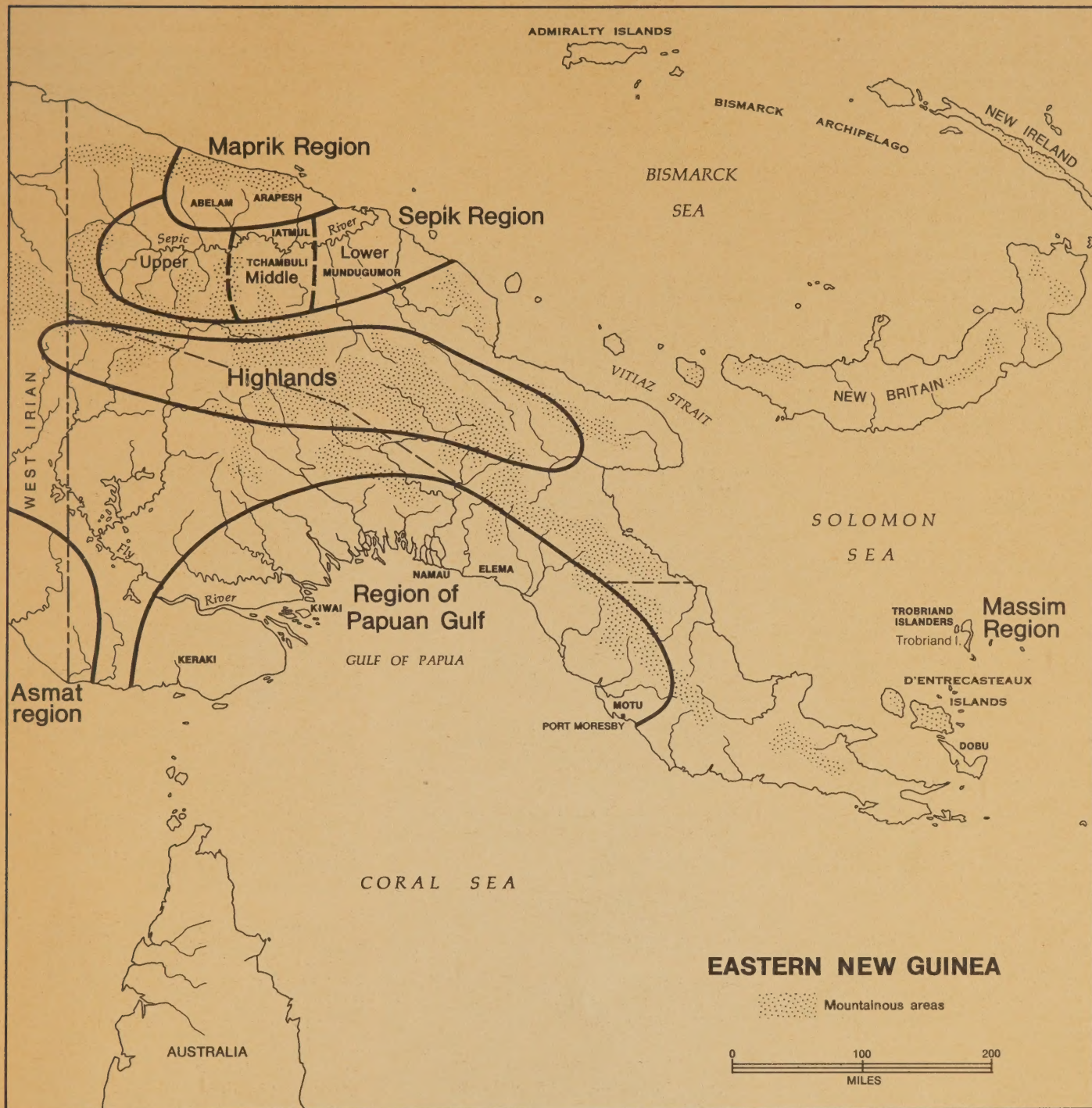
Le *relief* de l'île est accidenté et il présente des contrastes marqués: le littoral offre d'une part des plages sablonneuses et d'autre part d'immenses marécages à sagoutiers ou à palétuviers comme ceux des embouchures du Sépik et du Fly. L'intérieur est plissé de hautes montagnes, certaines volcaniques, d'autres coiffées de neiges éternelles.

Le *climat* de la Nouvelle-Guinée, maritime et tropical, subit à cause de sa situation géographique l'influence du mousson. Les précipitations sont abondantes toute l'année durant et donnent naissance à un réseau de rivières torrentueuses en haute altitude. En basse altitude, certaines se transforment en de grands fleuves aux cours méandriques qui sont relativement navigables.

L'humidité accablante vaut à la Nouvelle-Guinée une *végétation* luxuriante. Dans le nord on trouve, dans les plaines aussi bien que dans les montagnes à une altitude de 1000 à 2000 mètres, la mangrove et la forêt touffue. Il y foisonne des lianes serrées et des arbres géants (ébènes, bois de fer et copaliers). Dans le sud, la forêt s'éclaircit, la végétation devient semblable à celle de l'Australie: la brousse et les savanes à eucalyptus y dominent. En haute altitude la forêt est moussue et le sol spongieux.

La *faune* est également très variée: moustiques, sangsues, serpents, crocodiles se logent aux confins de la jungle. Divers types de marsupiaux, dont le kangourou, occupent les régions plus claires. La Nouvelle-Guinée est aussi le berceau des oiseaux du paradis aux plumages flamboyants.

Toutes ces disparités naturelles trouvent leur contrepartie dans la *mosaïque ethnologique* que forment les peuplades de Nouvelle-Guinée. Indonésiens, Négritos, Papous, Mélanésiens, et à une époque plus récente, Malais et Polynésiens, sont tous venus contribuer à l'hétérogénéité des peuples et des dialectes. Les types dominants sont ceux du Papou et du Mélanésien qui sont de petite taille, ont les cheveux frisés et la peau foncée.



1. Les Asmats

"Il n'y a pour l'homme que trois événements: naître, vivre, et mourir: il ne se sent pas naître, il souffre à mourir et il oublie de vivre."

Entre le ciel qui est toujours de pluie et l'océan qui est de boue, les Asmats sont habitants des vastes marécages de la Nouvelle-Guinée orientale. Les Asmats ne sont ni cultivateurs, ni marins, ni commerçants: ils sont chasseurs de tête et quelquefois anthropophages. La mort n'est pas un accident, c'est une occupation, un rite, un exercice où s'impose quelque éléance. La mort est fonctionnelle et fait intimement partie des rites de la vie. Hommes de l'occident, nous avons de la mort une idée tout autre: grimaçante, effrayée, sinistre... malade.

Le mort joyeux

"Dans une terre grasse et pleine d'escargots
Je veux creuser moi-même une fosse profonde
Où je puisse à loisir étaler mes vieux os
Et dormir dans l'oubli comme un requin dans l'onde.
O vers! noirs compagnons sans oreilles et sans yeux
Voyez venir à vous un mort libre et joyeux;
Philosophes viveurs, fils de la pourriture
A travers ma ruine allez donc sans remords
Et dites-moi s'il est encore quelque torture
Pour ce vieux corps sans âme et mort parmi les morts."
Beaudelaire

La figure d'un ancêtre consacre ce plat de sagou. L'arbre de sagou fournit la nourriture de base des Asmats et ses scarabées sont essentiels à toute fête rituelle.

Les Asmats ne s'embarrassent ni de mobilier, ni d'ustensiles inutiles, ni de ces liens de consommation qui semblent si chers à l'homme "civilisé" et qui, en définitive, le consomment. Chez les Asmats, il y a le dormir, le manger et le boire. Pour chaque besoin, il existe un objet qui le satisfait tout en prolongeant la nature. Ainsi le symbolisme des choses rejoint-il leur utilité.

Il y a bien longtemps que nous, gens de l'occident, avons oublié ce qu'est la faim. Notre culture collective est celle de l'amaigrissement. Pour d'autres, dont les indigènes de Nouvelle-Guinée, la faim est menace perpétuelle. Il y a 100 ans, lorsqu'avoir faim était encore pour quelques-uns des nôtres le destin de tous les jours, Rimbaud a écrit cet étonnant poème:

A genoux cinq petits – misère
Regardent le boulanger faire
Le lourd pain blond

Ils voient le fort bras blanc qui tourne
La pâte grise et qui l'enfourne
Dans un trou clair

Ils écoutent le bon pain cuire
Le boulanger au gras sourire
Grogne un vieil air.

Ils sont blottis, pas un ne bouge
Au souffle du soupirail rouge
Chaud comme un sein.

Quand, sous les poutres enfumées
Chantent les croûtes parfumées
et les grillons,

Que ce trou chaud souffle la vie
Ils ont leur âme si ravie
Sous leurs haillons,

Ils se ressentent si bien vivre
Les pauvres Jésus pleins de givre
Qu'ils sont là, tous,

Collant leurs petits museaux roses
Au treillage, grognant des choses
Entre les trous.

Tous bêtes, faisant leurs prières
Et repliés vers ces lumières du ciel ouvert.

1. Asmats

Dr. Edmund Carpenter, "anthropologist in the electronic world", permitted us to print this and the following excerpts of a first draft sent to colleagues for criticism before submission to the Department of Information and Extension Services, Territory of Papua and New-Guinea.

The world turned upside down

"Speak, that I May See Thee!
New Guinea has been called 'the last unknown'. Its highest mountains are snow-covered and below these, in early morning, you walk through clouds, your breath visible. Yet tropical swamps lie immediately north and south.

"Port Moresby, the capital of the eastern section, resembles a southern California town with air-conditioned buildings, supermarkets and drive-in theatre. Four hundred miles to the west, tiny, isolated bands practice cannibalism.

"The bulk of the population lies between these extremes, living in thousands of tiny villages and speaking over 700 separate languages.

"In 1969-70, the Territory of Papua and New Guinea hired me as a communications consultant. They sought advice on the use of radio, film, even television. They wanted to use these media to reach not only townspeople, but those isolated in swamps and mountain valleys and outer islands.

"I accepted the assignment because it gave me an unparalleled opportunity to step in and out of 10,000 years of media history, observing, probing, testing. I wanted to observe, for example, what happens when a person – for the first time – sees himself in a mirror, in a photograph, on film; hears his voice; sees his name. Everywhere New Guinea responded alike to these experiences: they ducked their heads and covered their mouths.

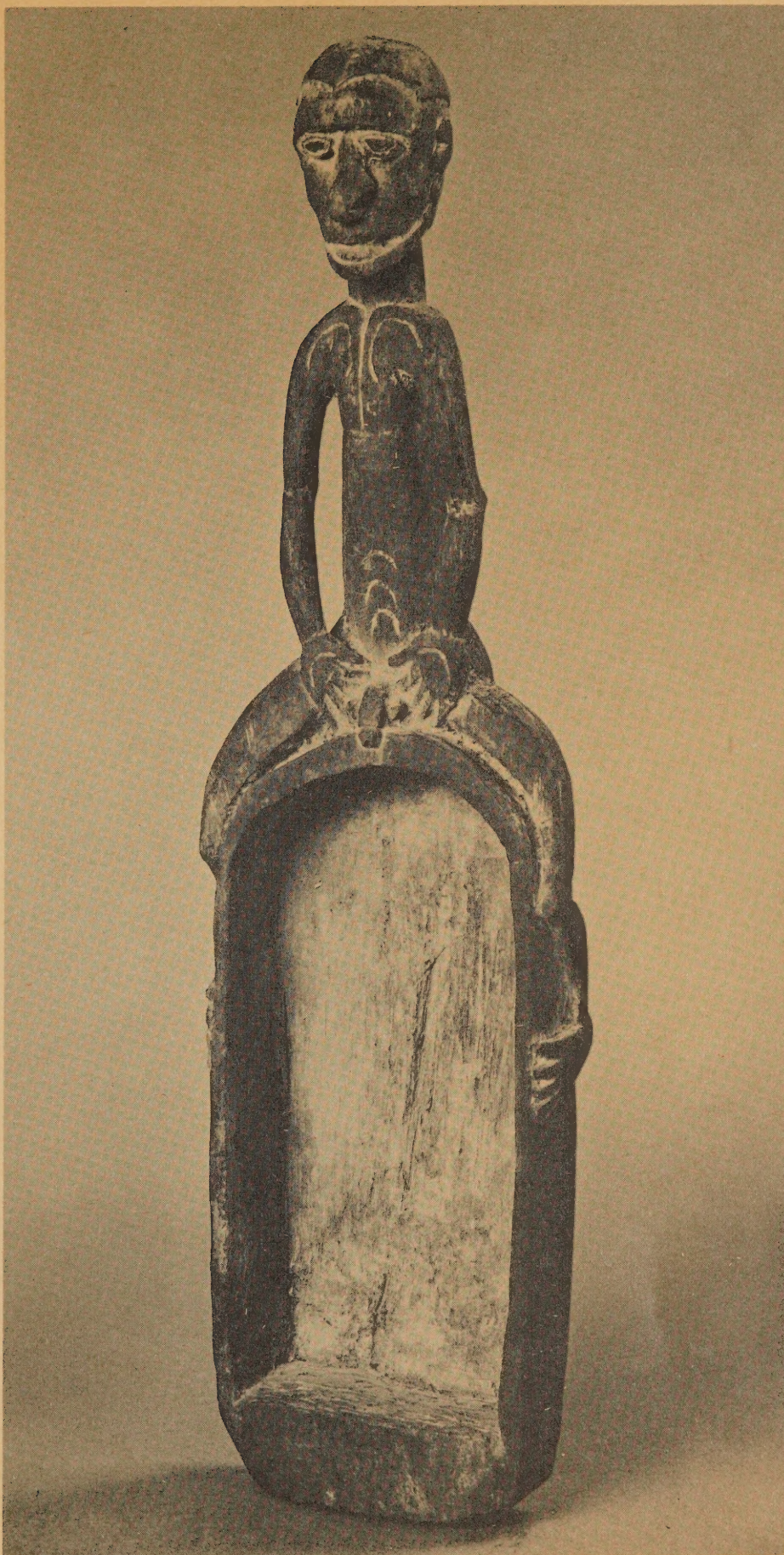
"When a shy or embarrassed person in our society ducks his head and covers his mouth, we say he is 'self-conscious'. But why does consciousness of self produce *this* response? Does the acute anxiety of sudden self-awareness lead men everywhere to conceal his powers of speech-thought (his breath, his soul) behind his hand, the way an awakened Adam concealed his sexual powers behind a Fig Leaf?

"Could it be that the deeper message these media conveyed wasn't sanitation or Westminster democracy, but self-discovery, self-awareness? Could this in part explain the riots in Rabaul and Kieta, towns where radio was part of daily life? The people of Rabaul had been in close contact with Westerners since 1885, and now suddenly they were marching in the streets.

"The Australian administrators were dedicated men, many of them ex-teachers and nearly all from Protestant middle-class backgrounds. They believed in democracy, cleanliness and a Personal God, and they promoted these goals via radio. Yet some of those who had listened most attentively to these sermons were now in angry revolt. The Administrators were puzzled and asked: *what message had really come through?*"
Edmund Carpenter

Plat à sagou—Sago dish

"Je suis le plat où les femmes servent le sagou. Le sagou est le pain quotidien de la tribu des Asmats. Je suis l'homme de tous les temps qui se nourrit en même temps que les hommes. Je suis le corps et l'esprit, l'âme et les sens."



2. La Papouasie

Les masques jouent un rôle important chez les peuplades de Nouvelle-Guinée. Ils président à d'innombrables cérémoniaux; ils sont suspendus au toit des maisons communales, ils servent à chasser les mauvais esprits, à protéger les récoltes, à héberger l'âme des ancêtres. Les masques sont les véhicules visibles du surnaturel.

A la différence des Asmats, les Kiwai, habitants du golfe de Papouasie, sont des jardiniers de quelque talent. Leur culture principale: l'igname, tubercule capable d'atteindre un poids de 50 livres. S'il appartient aux hommes de solliciter la bienveillance des esprits pour la protection des cultures, c'est aux femmes qu'incombe le lourd travail de la préparation du terrain, de la semence et de la récolte. Destin sinistre auquel fait penser la chanson de Georges Brassens:

Avec une bêche à l'épaule
Avec à la lèvre un doux chant
Avec à l'âme un grand courage
Il s'en allait trimer aux champs!

Pauvre Martin, pauvre misère
Creuse la terre, creuse le temps.

Pour gagner le pain de sa vie
De l'aurore jusqu'au couchant
Il s'en allait bêcher la terre
En tous les lieux, par tous les temps!

Pauvre Martin, pauvre misère
Creuse la terre, creuse le temps

Et quand la mort lui a fait signe de
labourer son dernier champ
Il creusa lui-même sa tombe
En faisant vite, en se cachant.

Pauvre Martin, pauvre misère
Creuse la terre, creuse le temps!

Il creusa lui-même sa tombe
En faisant vite, en se cachant
Et s'y étendit sans rien dire
Pour ne pas déranger les gens.

Pauvre Martin, pauvre misère
Dors dans la terre, dors dans le temps!

Les habitants de la Papouasie peuplent leurs maisons de crânes décorés.

Si le corps du décédé est enseveli sous terre, le crâne, lui, reste exposé aux éléments. Lorsqu'il s'est vidé de sa substance pour n'être que la grange de l'âme, le crâne est nettoyé aux plantes aromatiques, décoré d'yeux faits de coquilles et d'un nez en cire d'abeille. Orné de perles et de cerises, et pour finir, peint de couleurs vives. Pourquoi de telles précautions? Pour que le domicile de l'âme soit accueillant et joyeux.

Une société qui aurait éliminé tout ce qui est vague ou irrationnel pour s'en remettre au mesurable et au véritable pourrait-elle subsister?

2. Fly River and Papuan Gulf

Angelization

"Electricity has made angels of us all, not angels in the Sunday school sense of being good or having wings, but spirit freed from flesh, capable of instant transportation anywhere.

"The moment we pick up a phone, we're nowhere in space, everywhere in spirit. Nixon on TV is everywhere at once. This is St. Augustine's definition of God: a Being whose center is everywhere, where borders are nowhere.

"When a clerk stops waiting on us to answer a phone, we accept this without protest, yet it violates one of our most precious values – barbershop democracy. We accept it because pure spirit now takes precedence over spirit in flesh.

"I knew a Californian who read his poetry aloud at parties until his friends learned to silence him. But when he played recordings of these same poems, everyone listened.

"In New Guinea, when villagers ignore their leader, the Government may tape record his orders. The next day the assembled community hears his voice coming to them from a radio he holds in his own hand. Then they obey him."

Edmund Carpenter

Mirror, mirror

"Certainly their initial reaction to large mirrors suggested this was a wholly new experience for them. They were paralyzed: after their first startled response – covering their mouths and ducking their heads – they stood transfixed, staring at their images, only their stomach muscles betraying great tension. In a matter of days, however, they groomed themselves openly before mirrors.

"The notion that man possesses, in addition to his physical self, a symbolic self, is widespread, perhaps universal. A mirror corroborates this. It does more: it reveals that symbolic self outside the physical self. The symbolic self is suddenly explicit, public, vulnerable. Man's initial response to this is probably always traumatic."

Edmund Carpenter

Mingende Catholic Mission, New Guinea:1969

"Over a thousand worshippers came to Mass this Sunday, many decked with feathers and flowers, their faces painted, their bodies covered with clay. A few old men were armed, for display, not defense. One woman nursed a baby on one breast, a puppy on the other. Marvellous singing filled the high, old church with its earth floor and log pews. Men with large shells hanging from their noses had to lift these to take communion. Between services, several clawing, mud-rolling brawls broke out between jealous women, egged on by whooping spectators, but a calm priest slowly drove an ancient truck into each crowd, breaking up the fights, then returned to perform the next mass. One man wore a photograph of himself on his forehead, in front of his feathers; friends greeted him by examining his photograph."

Edmund Carpenter

Feeling with the eye

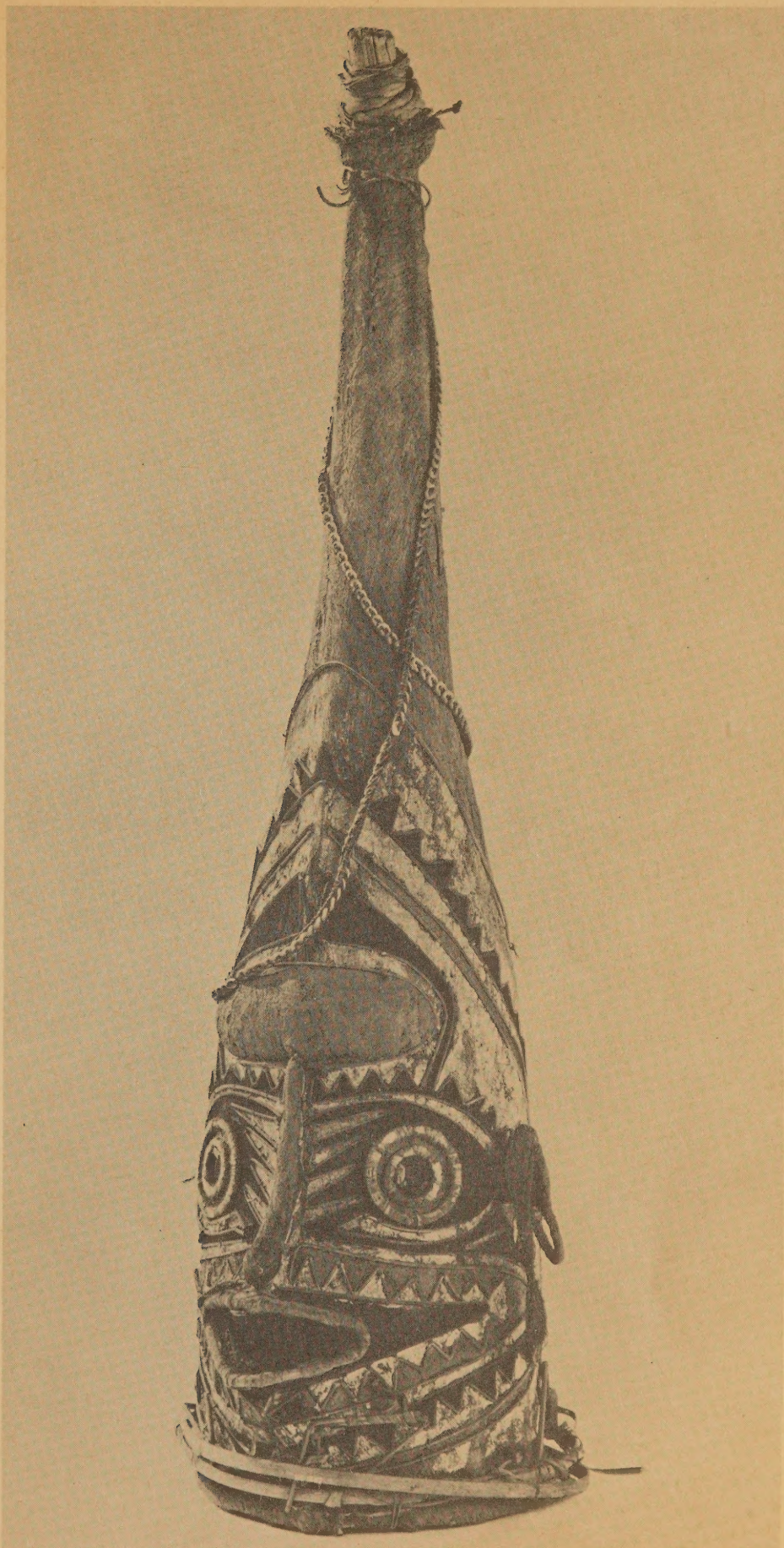
“ ‘To the blind, all things are sudden.’
Hard-edge art is a visual presentation,
but the experience it evokes or conveys
isn't visual: it's tactile. It's full of abrupt
encounters – sudden interfaces, then
emptiness.

“When you have interface and empti-
ness, you have Happenings. In the
world of Happenings, surfaces and
events collide and grind against each
other, creating new forms, much as the
action of dialogue creates new insights.
It's the world of all-at-onceness where
things hit each other but where there
are no connections.”

Edmund Carpenter

Masque de danse–Dancing Mask

“Je cache le visage pour révéler l'esprit.
Masque, je suis le plus rituel des objets.
Je chasse le diable, j'accueille les
ancêtres, je prie la nature d'être bonne
et l'avenir d'être favorable.”



3. La Papouasie.

Les Motus font la guerre essentiellement pour obtenir des têtes-rituelles. Ils se servent de boucliers comme celui-ci, peints d'esprits menaçants, face à l'ennemi.

Le bouclier n'est en fait qu'un masque de grandes dimensions dont on se sert pour effrayer l'ennemi. La tribu des Motus, redoutables chasseurs de têtes, se sert de ce bouclier pour annoncer sans doute à ses victimes, le triste sort qui leur est réservé.

Un jeune Nantau acquiert le droit de porter une ceinture d'écorce quand il est initié aux cérémonies de pairama et aux mystères de Kaismunu. Des monstres en osier liés aux rivières du Delta Purari annoncent par le tonnerre ou des rêves qu'ils veulent un pairama. La cérémonie qui comprend une fête au cochon sauvage apaise les monstres et empêche ainsi la maladie et d'autres malheurs. Ces créatures aident dans la chasse d'animaux et d'hommes, ils protègent aussi les intérêts des groupes d'alcôves.

Lorsqu'un enfant a été initié aux mystères des hommes, mystères de la nature, de la création, mystères du corps et de l'âme, mystère de l'homme et de l'animal, il peut revêtir, adulte, une ceinture en écorce de bois.

Le masque est le symbole d'un esprit – le Kovave – esprit bienveillant qui veille sur chacun des hommes de la tribu, esprit ancestral qui veille sur le passage d'une génération à une autre. Le Kovave, habitant de la forêt, habite aussi l'écorce du bambou qui sert à fabriquer le masque. Placé sur le visage d'un jeune homme il servira à l'initier aux mystères de la nature et de la vie. Le masque est ainsi symbole suprême et suprême jeu.

De tous les temps, chez tous les peuples, le tambour a été de toutes les cérémonies: celles de la vie et celles de la mort, celles de la guerre et celles de la paix, celles de l'espoir et celles du malheur. L'horloge est le tambour du temps mais le tambour est l'horloge du cœur. Partout où il y a des hommes il y a des tambours. Le tambour rassemble. Et quand il bat comme le cœur, il bat le rythme de la danse. Danse de vie ou danse de mort.

3. Papuan Gulf

Sensory profiles

"When we put primitive art on museum display, isolated, on a pedestal, against a white background, under intense light, we violate the intention of the maker and create an effect far removed from the original.

"Muting sight can increase awareness in other senses, especially hearing. The opposite effect – blotting out other sensory experience – can be achieved by heightening the input of a single sense. Dentists use high-pitched sound to numb pain. Turn up your hi-fi and you may not smell the burning toast until much too late.

"One can turn sound up by turning sound inward. In New Guinea, singers sometimes plug one or both ears, producing an 'inner voice' effect where pitch is felt, as vibration. Singers determine pitch by feel. The experience is not unlike rock music which one feels, often through the entire body.

"What I've said of muted sight and magnified sound are but two examples from a wide range of sensory patterns or profiles. Man everywhere programs his inner senses with the care and genius he programs his outer environment."
Edmund Carpenter

Memory

"I once naively thought my Eskimo hosts would be fascinated to hear about the remarkable world from which I came. In fact, they showed only irritation when I talked about it. If a tubercular Eskimo is taken from his igloo and put in a sanitarium in Brandon, Manitoba, or Hamilton, Ontario, and treated there for four years, gradually being given freedom to wander about the hospital and town, when he returns home, it's unlikely he will ever mention a single thing he witnessed or learned. The only natives, in my experience in a variety of cultures throughout the world, who showed interest in the outside world, were literate ones who had gone to school. For the others, the outside world was uncertain, dangerous, hostile.

"Artists and musicians may not be as conscious as mathematicians of the underlying rules that govern their fields, perhaps because these rules are not as explicit, but the rules of art and music are nevertheless there and the successful artist and musician obeys them. Obedience frees him to improvise, to play, to become involved creatively, repeating, repeating, repeating with endless variations.

"This repeat/repeat of cliché may be the key to memory. There is a vital difference between variations which maintain the freshness of a style and changes which destroy and replace that style. Native art is often startlingly original to us, but in its own context, it is to the highest degree conservative and familiar. When we reproduce this art in books and this music on records, we usually edit it sharply. We delete what is repetitious, since it bores us, in favor of variety, which we prefer. But the originals themselves are highly repetitious. Their recitation provides a tribal beat, a common pulse, to which the group collectively responds.

"Pre-literate art is not unlike modern advertising, much of which is sung and all of which is highly repetitious. Advertising isn't designed to train perception and awareness, but rather to insist that consumers merge with images and products.

"Such art isn't personal. It doesn't reflect the private point of view of an innovator. It's a corporate statement by a group. It's a public celebration. It lives within each member through memory, participation and improvisation.

"In contrast, art involving a single sense and expressing a private view, exists outside of the observer, in libraries and galleries, where it can be studied."

Edmund Carpenter



Bouclier—Shield

"Je suis homme, je suis vulnérable et quelquefois, au coeur de la bataille, j'ai peur de l'ennemi qui me poursuit. Mais à me voir, toutes dents et toutes mains, l'ennemi se dira qu'il fait face à un monstre."

4. Les îles Trobriand

On songe à un paravent ou même à quelqu' éventail mais il s'agit d'un bouclier. . . . Bouclier qui ne représente ni esprit, ni divinité, ni magie, ni encensement mais tout simplement le talent d'une peuplade éprise d'art.

Il ne s'agit ni de guerre, ni de chasse de têtes ennemies mais du plaisir de la danse, de la joie, de l'abondance. Ce bouclier-ornement est déjà une danse taillée dans le bois.

Emprisonnés dans une île ses habitants se font marins, de marins ils se font vite commerçants et commerçants ils échangent les produits de leur travail et de leur talent contre les vivres et les matières premières dont ils peuvent avoir besoin. C'est le cas des artisans des îles Trobriand. Ils échangent des plats sculptés, des lances pour la pêche et la chasse, des peignes et des sculptures contre l'argile, le rotin, le bambou et le sagou qui leur font défaut. Cette sculpture est un merveilleux exemple de leur art.

Avec finesse ils y ont capté les arabesque du corps. Il est porté pour célébrer une bonne récolte d'ignames.

. . . L'homme contient en lui-même de quoi rompre l'équilibre qu'il soutenait avec son milieu. Il contient ce qu'il faut pour se mécontenter de ce qui le contentait.

Il est à chaque instant autre chose que ce qu'il est. Il ne forme pas un système fermé de besoins, et de satisfaction de ses besoins. A peine son corps et son appétit sont apaisés qu'au plus profond de lui quelque chose s'agite, le tourmente, l'illumine, le commande, l'aiguillonne, le manœuvre secrètement. Et c'est l'esprit . . .

"Quand il n'y a ni dieux à prier, ni divinités à craindre . . . quand il n'est ni monstres sacrés, ni visages où souffle l'esprit, l'art n'a rien d'autre à faire qu'être lui-même: l'art pour l'art."

4. Trobriand Islands

Nature

"Meandering or labyrinthine paths, spirals, mazes, actually followed in ritual (initiation) dances, or symbolically represented in ritual objects, represent the archetypal endeavors of the divine ancestor, the prototypical man, to emerge into this world, to be born.

"The story of the Labyrinth, for example, is found to be a representation of anal birth; the tortuous paths are the bowels, and the thread of Ariadne is the umbilical cord: Mother is mold, moder, matter; Mutter is mud.

"The labyrinth, or maze, is also a dance; the dance of life. Then as all actions of mankind are but a labyrinth of maze. So let your dances be entwined."

Norman O. Brown

World's end

"We gave each person a Polaroid shot of himself. At first there was no understanding. The photographs were black and white, flat, static, odorless – far removed from any reality they knew. They had to be taught to 'read' them. I pointed to a nose in a picture, then touched the real nose, etc. Often one or more boys would intrude into the scene, peering intently from picture to subject, then shout, 'It's you!'

"Recognition gradually came into the subject's face. And fear. Suddenly he covered his mouth, ducked his head and turned his body away. After this first startled response, often repeated several times, he either stood transfixed at his image, only his stomach muscles betraying tension, or he retreated from the group, pressing his photograph against his chest, showing it to no one, slipping away to study it in solitude.

"We recorded this over and over on film, including men retreating to private places, sitting apart, without moving, sometimes for up to twenty minutes, their eyes rarely leaving their portraits.

"When we projected movies of their neighbors, there was pandemonium. They recognized the moving-images of film much faster than the still-images of photographs.

"Seeing *themselves* on film was quite a different thing. It required a minor logistic feat to send our negative out, get it processed, then returned, but it was worth the effort.

"There was absolute silence as they watched themselves, a silence broken only by whispered identification of faces on the screen.

"We recorded these reactions, using infrared light and film. In particular we recorded the terror of self-awareness that revealed itself in uncontrolled stomach trembling.

"The tape-recorder startled them. When I first turned it on, playing back their own voice, they leaped away. They understood what was being said, but didn't recognize their own voices and shouted back, puzzled and frightened.

"But, in an astonishingly short time, these villagers, including children and even a few women, were making movies themselves, taking Polaroid shots of each other, and endlessly playing with tape-recorders. No longer fearful of their own portraits, men wore them openly, on their foreheads.

"When we returned to Sio, months later, I thought at first we had made a wrong turn in the river network. I didn't recognize the place. Several houses had been rebuilt in a new style. Men wore European clothing. They carried themselves differently. They acted differently. Some had disappeared down river toward a government settlement, 'wandering between two worlds/One dead, the other powerless to be born'.

"In one brutal movement they had been taken out of a tribal existence and transformed into detached individuals, lonely, frustrated, no longer at home – anywhere.

"I fear our visit precipitated this crisis. Not our presence, but the presence of new media. A more isolated people might have been affected far less, perhaps scarcely at all. But the people of Sio were vulnerable. For a decade they had been moving imperceptibly toward Western culture. Our demonstration of media tipped the scales. Hidden changes suddenly coalesced and surfaced.

"The effect was Instant Alienation. Their wits and sensibilities, released from tribal restraints, created a new identity: the private individual. For the first time, each man saw himself and his environment clearly and he saw them as separable.

"It will immediately be asked if anyone has the right to do this to another human being, no matter what the reason. If this question is painful to answer when the situation is seen in microcosm, how is it answered when seen in terms of radio transmitters reaching hundreds of thousands of people daily, the whole process unexamined, undertaken blindly?"

Edmund Carpenter



Dance Shield–Bouclier de danse

... to approach with song every object we meet.

5. La région Maprik

Nous sommes les masques d'énormes pommes de terre tropicales qui ont pour nom igname. Pourquoi les pommes de terre porteraient-elles un masque? Parce que les hommes adorent l'igname, pain du corps et pain de l'esprit. Nous sommes des masques d'ignames; nous sommes l'abondance, le ventre plein; nous sommes la fête au village – et nous sourions.

L'igname est une gigantesque pomme de terre des tropiques, ventrue, joviale, bien portante et nourissante. Lorsque la récolte est faite, on la célèbre joyeusement. Pour exprimer l'abondance, la force, le travail, la masculinité et surtout pour protéger les jardins contre les mauvais esprits, on confectionne ces masques qui sont autant de têtes fantastiques. Le rituel de la tête n'est d'ailleurs pas étranger à l'occident.

"... tous ceux-là se bousculaient, se dépêchaient car il y avait un grand dîner de têtes et chacun s'était fait celle qu'il voulait. L'une, une tête de pipe en terre, l'autre, une tête d'amiral anglais; il y en avait avec des têtes de boule puante ... des têtes d'animaux malades de la tête, des têtes de fromage de tête, des têtes de pied, des têtes de monseigneurs et des têtes de crémier."

Prévert, Paroles

5. Maprik Region

Technology is explicitness

"It's a serious mistake to underestimate the trauma any new technology produces, especially any new communications technology. When people first encounter writing, they seem always to suffer great psychic dislocation. With speech, they hear consciousness, but with writing they see it. They suddenly experience a new way of being in relation to reality. 'How do I know what to think,' asks Alice, 'till I see what I say?'"

"Seeing one's name for the first time can be electrifying. Isak Dinesen tells of recording a deposition for an illiterate Kikuyu: 'When Jogona had at last come to the end of his tale, and I had got it all down, I told him that I was going to read it to him. He turned away from me while I was reading, as if to avoid all distractions.'

"'But as I read out his name ... he swiftly turned his face to me, and gave me a great fierce flaming glance, so exuberant with laughter that it changed the old man into a boy, into the very symbol of his youth. Again as I finished the document and was reading out his name ... the vital glance was repeated, this time deepened and calmed, with a new dignity.'

"'Such a glance did Adam give the Lord when He formed him out of the dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, I had created him and shown him himself: Jogona Kanyagga of life everlasting. When I handed him the paper, he took it reverently and greedily, folded it up in a corner of his cloak and kept his hand upon it, and there was proof of his existence. Here was something which Jogona Kanyagga had performed, and which would preserve his name for ever: the flesh was made of word and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.'"

Edmund Carpenter

Love thy label as thyself

"In Kandangan village the people became co-producers with us in making a film. The initial proposal came from us, but the actual filming of an initiation ceremony became largely their production.

"In this area of the Sepik, the male initiation rite is absolutely forbidden to women, in the past on penalty of death. Our chief cameraman was a woman. It never occurred to us to ask if she might film: we assumed such a request would not only be denied, it would offend. But the Kandangan elders asked if she was good, and when told 'Yes, better than any of us,' they requested that she operate one camera. Not only did they permit her inside the sacred enclosure, but they showed her where to position her equipment, helped her move it and delayed the ceremony while she reloaded. I'm convinced she was allowed to witness this rite, not because she was an outsider, but solely because her presence was necessary for the production of the best possible film.

"The initiates were barely conscious at the end of their ordeal, but they grinned happily when shown Polaroid shots of their scarified backs. The elders asked to have the sound track played back to them. They then asked that the film be brought back and projected, promising to erect another sacred enclosure for the screening.

"Finally they announced that this was the last involuntary initiation and they offered for sale their ancient water drums, the most sacred objects of this ceremony. Film threatened to replace a ceremony hundreds, perhaps thousands of years old.

"Yet film could never fulfill the ceremony's original function. That function was to test young men for manhood and weld them forever into a closed, sacred society. Now the ceremony, and by an extension the entire society, could be put on a screen before them, detached from them. They could watch themselves. No one who ever comes to know himself with the detachment of an observer is ever the same again.

"Postscript: When the film was not finished within the promised time and hence not shown in the village, involuntary initiations were resumed."

Edmund Carpenter

Of course in this you fellows see more than I could see. You see me.

Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

"In the highlands, however, and even in the Middle Sepik, most villagers know what cameras are and the moment they see one pointed at them, their behavior changes. This change is far more pronounced than that produced by awareness that one is simply being observed. A camera holds the potential for self-viewing, self-awareness, and where such awareness is fresh, it can be traumatic.

"Using long lenses, we filmed people who were unaware of our presence. Then one of us stepped from concealment and stood watching, but not interrupting their activity. Finally the cameraman set up his equipment in full view, urging everyone to go on with whatever he was doing. Almost invariably, body movements became faster, jerky, without poise or confidence. Faces that had been relaxed, froze or alternated between twitching and rigidity.

"Thus we had sequences showing people who, in their own minds were: 1/unobserved, 2/being observed by a stranger, 3/being recorded on film which they later might see. There was little difference between 1 and 2, but 3 was quite different.

"Before we learned better, we asked people to repeat actions just observed but missed in filming. It was hopeless. Subjects were willing enough but their self-conscious performances bore little resemblance to their unconscious behavior. Among the hundreds of subjects filmed in a variety of situations, I cannot recall a single person, familiar with a camera, who was capable of

ignoring it. This makes me wonder about ethnographic films generally. Even where subjects are accomplished actors, how does their acting compare with their behavior when no cameras are present? We may compliment their acting, but is it the theatrical performance we admire or their true-to-life impersonation?"
Edmund Carpenter

Yam Mask—Masque d'igname

Good magic opens the mysteries to all;
bad magic seeks simply to mystify.



6. Le Haut Sépik

Ces peintures sur écorce sont probablement liées aux planches cérémoniales Gerua. Elles peuvent aussi être liées aux morts puisque des cochons sont sacrifiés par plusieurs tribus pour apaiser leurs fantômes malins.

On parle chez nous depuis presque un demi-siècle, de l'art qui ne reproduit pas le réel mais qui l'interprète, le réorganise, l'analyse et le rend quelquefois abstrait. Nous n'avons rien découvert que les artistes dits primitifs de Nouvelle-Guinée ne savaient déjà.

L'homme croît, l'enfant joue. Ce ne sont que des jeux.
C'est la mort qui nous fait vivre;
C'est la vie qui nous tue.
Héraclite

Frères humains qui après nous vivez,
N'ayez les coeurs contre nous endurcis,
Car, si pitié de nous pauvres avez,
Dieu en aura plus tôt de vous mercis.
Vous nous voyez ci-attachés cinq, six:
Quant de la chair, que trop avons
nourrie,
Elle est pièça dévorée et pourrie,
Et nous, les os, devenons cendre et
poudre,
De notre mal personne ne s'en rie;
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille
absoudre!

Se frères vous clamons, pas n'en devez
Avoir dédain, quoi que fûmes occis
Par justice. Toutefois, vous savez
Que tous les hommes n'ont pas bon
sens rassis;
Excusez-nous puis que sommes transis,
Envers le fils de la Vierge Marie,
Que sa grâce ne soit pour nous tarie,
Nous préservant de l'inférieure foudre.
Nous sommes morts, âme ne nous harie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille
absoudre!

La pluie nous a débués et lavés,
Et le soleil desséchés et noircis;
Pies, corbeaux, nous ont les yeux
cavés,
Et arraché la barbe et les sourcils.
Jamais nul temps nous ne sommes
assis;
Puis çà, puis là, comme le vent varie,
A son plaisir sans cesser nous charrie,
Plus becquetés d'oiseaux que dés à
coudre.
Ne soyez donc de notre confrérie;
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille
absoudre!

Prince Jésus, qui sur tous as maîtrise,
Garde qu'Enfer n'ait de nous
seigneurie:
A lui n'ayons que faire ne que soudre.
Hommes, ici n'a point de moquerie;
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille
absoudre!

François Villon, Ballade des pendus

Parmi les peuplades des montagnes de Nouvelle-Guinée, la vie est dure, la guerre féroce et constante, la mort compagne de tous les jours. C'est dans les montagnes, en effet, que vivent surtout les chasseurs de têtes. Le but des visages fantasques qui décorent leurs boucliers est, de donner à l'ennemi un avant-goût de ce qui l'attend et ainsi de le paralyser de peur. Les boucliers sont un peu l'image squelettique de la mort et de sa faux.

Une charogne

Rappelez-vous l'objet que nous vîmes,
mon âme.
Ce beau matin d'été si doux:
Au détour d'un sentier une charogne
infâme
Sur un lit semé de cailloux . . .

Et le ciel regardait la carcasse superbe
Comme une fleur s'épanouir
La puanteur était si forte que sur
l'herbe
Vous crûtes vous évanouir . . .
Et pourtant vous serez semblable à
cette ordure
A cette horrible infection

Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du mal

6. Upper Sepik

Words in space

"I see radio as potentially very dangerous in New Guinea, especially where it lacks serious competition from other media. Radio's role in North Africa and Indonesia should serve as a warning. In each place, it broke down small, traditional tribes, then retribalized the populations as a whole, building nationalism to a feverish pitch and creating unreasonable national goals and consumer hopes. Radio simply does not promote the sort of social structure and economic specialization necessary for an increase both in living standard and military might, though both are easily promised via air waves.

"Those who control the content of radio take such arguments lightly. To them, what matters is what radio says. To me, what matters is what radio does. They regard radio as a neutral instrument and place full responsibility for its

use on people. I see nothing 'neutral' about any technology. To me, all technologies are human extensions and those extensions create different people."
Edmund Carpenter

Portraits

"A photographic portrait, when new and privately possessed, promotes identity, individualism: It offers opportunities for self-recognition, self-study. It provides the extra sensation of objectivizing to self. It makes that self more real, more dramatic. For the subject, it's no longer enough to be: now he knows he is. He is conscious of himself.

"Until man becomes conscious of his personal appearance, his private identity, there is little self-expression.

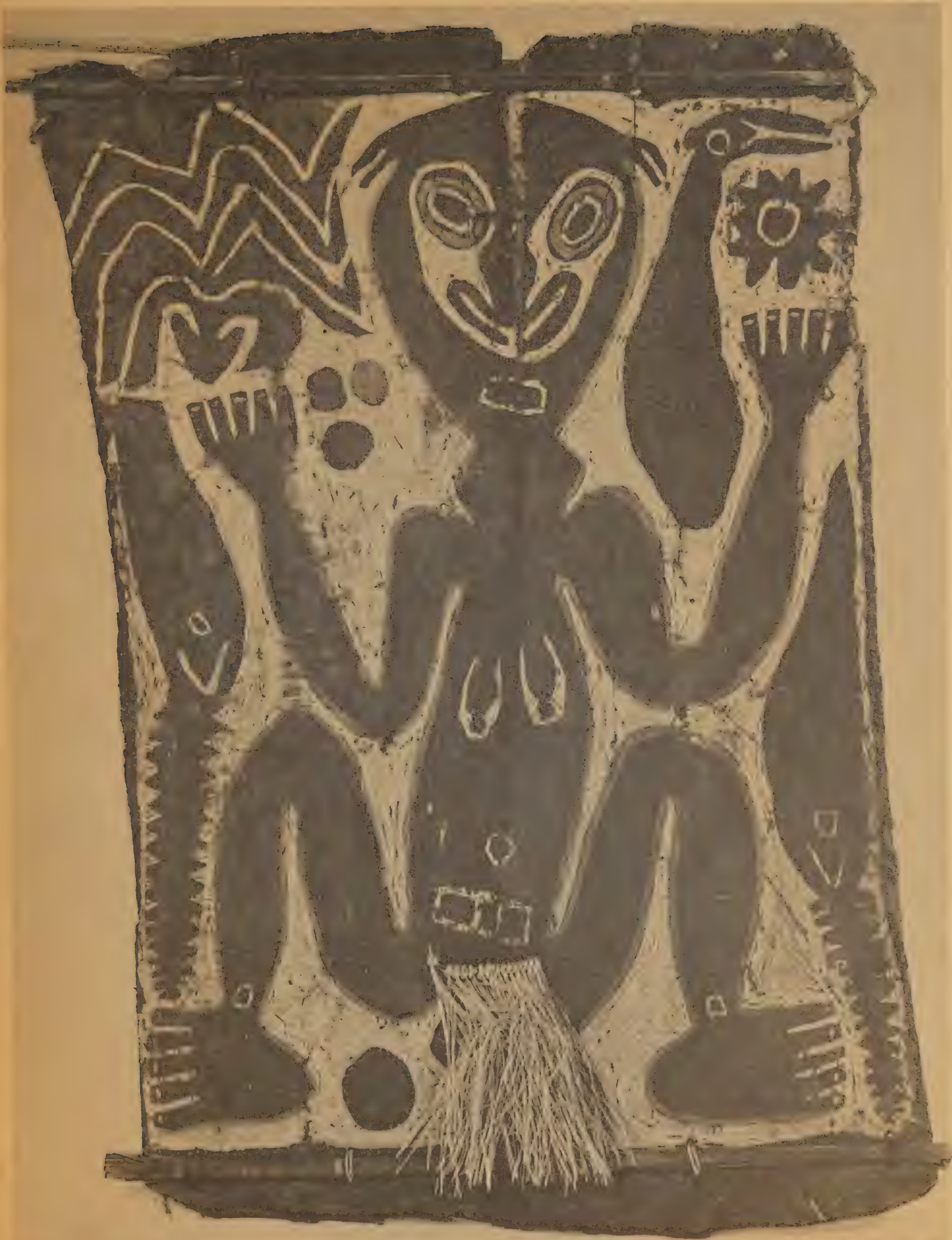
"One elderly man, dressed as a warrior, offered his profile to the camera and began to shout straight past us toward the horizon. I had the feeling this posture survived from some ancient battlefield.

"One day, at a marriage ceremony, we offered to photograph the bridal couple. The groom immediately posed with a male friend. We re-posed him with his pregnant bride and year-old child. Some weeks later we visited their home and saw this photograph carefully pinned up.

"Actually, the incident was infinitely more complicated than this brief account indicates. It was instantly obvious from the behavior of everyone present that the picture he had requested would have been routine, whereas the picture we took was anything but routine. It was as if we had photographed, in our society, the groom kissing the best man. All the power and prestige of the camera had been used in direct conflict with one of the deepest cultural values of this Highland New Guinea society."
Edmund Carpenter

Bark painting—Peinture sur écorce

Are we any better off than the savage who believes his fever has been cured because an evil spirit has been driven out of his system?



7. Le Sépik moyen

Originaires de la région du fleuve Sépik ces êtres sculptés sont les repositifs d'esprits anciens – les intercesseurs entre l'homme et l'infini, le présent et tous les passés, le présent et tous les futurs. Ni anges, ni bêtes, visibles et en même temps secrets, ces personnages hautement schématisés sont d'ici et d'ailleurs; ils sont l'inspiration des sorciers.

Le dormeur du val

C'est un trou de verdure, où chante une rivière
Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons
D'argent; où le soleil, de la montagne fière,
Luit: c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.

Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue,
Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,
Dort; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,
Pâle dans son lit vert où la lumière pleut.

Les pieds dans les glaïeuls, il dort.
Souriant comme
Sourirait un enfant malade, il fait un somme:
Nature, berce-le chaudement: il a froid.
Les parfums ne font pas frissonner sa narine;
Il dort dans le soleil, la main sur sa poitrine
Tranquille. Il a deux trous rouges au côté droit.
Rimbaud

Vous anéantissez les sauvages par amour de la logique, et aussi par pudeur, et par charité. . . . Vous êtes des saints. Cela vous brise comme verre d'entendre faire l'amour et rêver, sans yeux, au grand soleil. Si le sauvage affirme qu'il est un homme, ce n'est pas pour se distinguer des animaux mais des esprits. S'il se tait, ils se taisent, s'il chante, ils chantent, s'il danse, ils dansent. Il les porte sur son visage. Le fétichisme est le contraire de la religion. Le sauvage dresse les esprits les uns contre les autres, se venge des uns, se sert des autres, remplace ceux qui sont usés, toutes ses croyances varient et il rit ou il pleure des spectacles qu'elles lui donnent.

Paul Eluard, L'Art Sauvage

Ce qui importe ce n'est pas la qualité de la femme, c'est la distance qui la sépare de l'homme, la distance qui sépare le rêve de la réalité. L'éloignement de l'objet de ses désirs est le chemin et la mesure de son exaltation.
Don Quichotte

7. Middle Sepik

"Nature loves to hide
The sun is new every day
You could not step twice in the same river; for other and yet other waters are ever flowing on.

A man's character is his destiny."

Heraclitus, ca. 400 B.C.

Moments preserved

"Irving Penn took a series of extraordinary photographs at the 1970 Goroka Agricultural Show, a great gathering of tribes held annually in the Highlands, attended by thousands of villagers, many elaborately plumed and painted.

"As usual, Penn employed a collapsible-portable studio with one wall open and the camera outside, looking in. The secret of this studio was that it created its own space – space without background.

"The moment subjects stepped across that threshold, they changed, totally. All confusion and excitement ceased. Even those outside became still. A sudden intensity possessed everyone.

"The same subjects who, moments before, posed comically for tourists, affecting exaggerated poses, now behaved with intense concentration. Their bodies became rigid, their muscles tense; their fingers tightly gripped whatever they touched. When Penn re-positioned them, he found their bodies stiff, in a way he never found subjects in our society.

"The crowd outside, looking in, also became rigid. Chaos ceased and the scene became tableau. These photographs aren't anthropological documents in the usual sense. They don't record moments out of daily life. No captions explaining decorations or describing ceremonies would be relevant. Absolutely nothing that can be said about the culture or personality of the subjects is pertinent to their pictures. What holds us, fascinates us, is their stance, above all their eyes.

"A camera is the ideal instrument for preserving the momentary art of body decoration and face paint. But ordinary photographs can preserve such art. These photographs are not ordinary. Penn has captured something so elusive, so momentary, that, were it not for the fact the camera created it, it's unlikely a camera could record it.

"And even now, with that elusive something captured and spread before us, we scarcely know what to make of it. One thing is certain: on every face, even the faces of children, there is fear. Not fear of camera or cameraman. Not ordinary fear.

"If this were ordinary fear, subjects would be glancing for reassurance toward companions outside. Instead, they stare at the lens.

"Nor is this the fear of those who, seeing their images for the first time, cover their mouths to preserve their identities. For participants at the Goroka Fair, that was past history. Most knew a good deal about cameras. They knew their spirits were so powerful they could do more than just cast a reflection on a mirror; they could leave a permanent imprint on that mirror, an imprint that would preserve forever this moment, this man.

"Bedecked in barbaric splendor once designed to strike terror into their enemies, these ex-warriors asked to be recorded for posterity. Yet what we see is not terrifying expressions, but expressions of terror, combined with an exaltation that confers an awesome dignity on every subject. We see men at the very moment they voluntarily leave everything familiar behind and step forever into limbo, going through that vanishing point alone and going through it wide-awake.

"When Alice went through the Looking Glass, Victorians called her a fairytale figure, but the coming of electricity meant we would all go through that vanishing point from which none return unchanged.

"Now it was the New Guineans' turn.

"Everyone who watched understood. Those outside kept their eyes on the subjects, while the subjects kept their eyes on the lens. They never looked at Penn, nor to one side, nor at those outside. Their eyes fixed unwaveringly on that single point, no matter how long the session. That point was the point men enter when they leave this world behind and step alone, absolutely alone, into limbo. That was the source of their terror and exaltation.

"One sees that same intense concentration in Brady photographs; in portraits of Indians in the Old West; in Renaissance paintings of unsmiling dukes staring down eternity. Our eyebeams lock with those of strangers at some timeless, spaceless point. Those eyes stare back at us with an intensity we seldom encounter today in the portraits of our smiling leaders and graduating seniors.

"Rembrandt was said to be the first great master whose sitters sometimes dreaded seeing their portraits. Perhaps one reason we could never produce another Rembrandt is that we no longer produce such sitters.

"The technology that hoicked man out of both his environment and his body, allowing him to enter and leave limbo at will, has now become so casual, so environmental, we make that trip with the numbness of commuters, our eyes unseeing, the mystery of self-confrontation, self-discovery, gone."
Edmund Carpenter

Carved Wooden Figure—Sculpture

... the human being carries forward from his prehistoric past a long career of predation and risk taking during which speed, strength, and aggressive cunning were as much a part of normal behavior as the tenderer emotions. *N.O.Brown*



8. Le Sépik Moyen

Histoire ahurissante: pour être promu à la dignité d'homme les jeunes de la tribu des Tchambuli doivent se procurer le crâne d'une victime. Or les Tchambuli ne sont pas guerriers. Solution: on demande à des tribus, que ce genre d'activité repousse moins, de se procurer les têtes nécessaires. La tête est recouverte d'argile peinte en noir et blanc, décorée d'yeux de coquillage et ornée de boucles. Les rites terminés la tête est pendue à un crochet trophée dans l'édifice cérémonial de la tribu.

"En somme l'élément social qu'aujourd'hui nous composons est fait d'éléments contradictoires. D'une part, jamais l'homme n'a eu besoin pour vivre d'une aussi grande quantité d'hommes et de créatures de tous genres. D'autre part, il n'a jamais eu aussi peu besoin de leur présence immédiate ou prochaine. On dirait que tout se passe par abonnement, par souscription à une immense providence anonyme. Moyennant un service que nous remplissons, on nous délivre un carnet de coupons grâce à quoi nous pouvons satisfaire tous nos besoins. Jamais les hommes n'ont été à la fois aussi solidaires et aussi seuls." *Claudel*

La tribu des Tchambuli habite au bord d'un lac, au pied des montagnes dont elle porte le nom. Industrielle et artiste, elle fabrique divers objets tels ces crochets, dont l'utilité n'élimine ni la grâce, ni la fantaisie, ni le sentiment de la présence humaine. On y pend des têtes humaines.

Danse macabre

Les yeux profonds sont faits de vide et de ténèbres,
Et son crâne, de fleurs artistement coiffé,
Oscille nullement sur ses frêles vertèbres
O charme d'un néant follement attifé!

Aucuns t'appelleront une caricature
Qui ne comprennent pas, amants ivres de chair
L'élégance sans nom de l'humaine armature.

Baudelaire. Les Fleurs du mal

8. Middle Sepik

Déjà vu

"Reading is hard work. It makes enormous demands upon the neurological system. It employs one sense only, and that sense in a most peculiar way. This may be one reason why natives, who often need less sleep than literate people, suddenly require eight hours sleep a night when taught to read. They also have to put on clothes, thus conserving body heat and energy, before they can read. But a naked man can watch TV.

"Reading makes more demands on the brain. Media are really environments, with all the effects geographers and biologists associate with environments. We live inside our media. We are their content. TV images come at us so fast, in such profusion, they engulf us, tattoo us. We're immersed. It's like skin diving. We're surrounded and whatever surrounds, involves. TV doesn't just wash over us and then 'go out of mind'. It goes into mind, deep into mind. The subconscious is a world in which we store everything, not something, and TV extends the subconscious.

"Such experiences are difficult to describe in words. Like dreams or sports, they evade verbal classification.

"Asked where he has been, a child who has been running, shouting, slipping in the mud, smelling autumn leaves, eating hot dogs, replies, 'out'. Asked what he has been doing, he says, 'Nothing'. Finally the parent extracts an acceptable answer: 'Playing baseball'. But that reply is adequate only to the parent. The child knows how inadequate it is, how inadequate words are for any total experience.

"Any picture is a mass of information in a flash. A written caption or narration may classify bits of this information, telling us what to look at and how to respond to it. But most information on TV is unclassified – like a telephone directory that hasn't been alphabetized. This makes it splendidly attractive to artists and others who seek to create their own worlds. But for most people it means a-never-to-end-too-much-of-things.

"Teachers, of course, teach classified information. This is why they love lectures and texts. Any language is itself a great classifier. It makes the complex coherent, the ambiguous explicit.

"Information packaged in words is easier to learn, recall, and have opinions about than information packaged in pictures, especially moving pictures. How much more difficult to recall unclassified information! How impossible to have opinions about it!

"TV has little to do with communications in the old sense of transfer of knowledge from knower to not-knower. For one thing, there's nobody out there waiting to receive messages, no audience to be bombarded. There are only potential participants.

"This is especially true in the modern classroom. Once students were empty buckets waiting to be filled. Now these buckets are overflowing with information acquired outside the classroom. In a world of media crop-dusting, the classroom has become a fallout shelter. It's now a place of detention, not attention.

"Unlike print, TV doesn't transport bits of classified information. Instead it transports the viewer. It takes his spirit on a trip, an instant trip.

"This is the inner trip, the inward quest, the search for meaning beyond the world of daily appearances. It's the prophet blinded so that sight is yielded for insight'."
Edmund Carpenter

WHN-1050 is a put on. Everybody put on WHN radio (or else). – subway ad
“We wear our media. They are our real clothes. We don’t read a newspaper: we step into it, the way we step into a warm bath. It surrounds us totally. It environs us in information.

“Radio and TV bombard us with images, cover us tattoo style: they clothe us in information, program us. At which point nudity ceases to have meaning. Asked if she had anything on when posing for nude calendar shots, Marilyn Monroe replied ‘The radio’.

“We come to know a thing by being inside it. We get an inside view. We step into the belly of the beast and that precisely, is what the masked costumed dancer does. He puts on the beast.

“Traditionally in New Guinea dancers in floral skirts and feather headdresses put on the jungle, wrapped themselves in it. They became one with the plants and animals. Now they wrap themselves in information. Radio re-clothes them.”
Edmund Carpenter



Carved Suspension Hook–Crochet

If death is a part of life, there is a peculiar morbidity in the human attitude toward death . . . Animals let death be a part of life, and use the death instinct to die; man aggressively builds immortal cultures and makes history in order to fight death.

9. Sépik maritime et régions montagneuses

Les Mundugumor pratiquent des cultes d'objets fétiches. Ceux-ci comprennent de tels masques en bois importés qui sont traités comme esprits surnaturels. Possessions privées et héréditaires, ils sont conservés dans des maisons spéciales. L'initiation consiste en une fête qui prépare les jeunes par la torture à la vue de ces objets sacrés.

Pourquoi les indigènes de Nouvelle-Guinée ont-ils tant de masques? Mais parce que comme l'explique par ailleurs Paul Eluard les "sauvages" ont peuplé leur univers d'esprits de toutes sortes qu'il s'agit d'apaiser, de solliciter, de chasser, d'inviter, d'effrayer ou de satisfaire. Or comme il ne saurait être question de voir un esprit sans logis, cette crise de l'habitation spirituelle est résolue par la multiplication des masques.

"... l'idée de surréalisme tend simplement à la récupération totale de notre force psychique par un moyen qui n'est autre que la descente vertigineuse en nous, l'illumination systématique des lieux cachés et l'obscurcissement progressif des autres lieux, la promenade perpétuelle en pleine zone interdite..."

Manifeste du Surréalisme cité en Paul Eluard.

La psychanalyse du feu

"Si tout ce qui change lentement s'explique par la vie, tout ce qui change vite s'explique par le feu. Le feu est l'ultra-vivant. Le feu est intime et il est universel. Il vit dans notre cœur. Il vit dans le ciel. Il monte des profondeurs de la substance et s'offre comme un amour. Il redescend dans la matière et se cache, latent, contenu comme la haine et la vengeance. Parmi tous les phénomènes, il est vraiment le seul qui

puisse recevoir aussi nettement les deux valorisations contraires: le bien et le mal. Il brille au Paradis. Il brûle à l'Enfer. Il est douceur et torture. Il est cuisine et apocalypse. Il est plaisir pour l'enfant assis sagement près du foyer; il punit cependant de toute désobéissance quand on veut jouer de trop près avec ses flammes. Il est bien-être et il est respect. C'est un dieu tutélaire et terrible, bon et mauvais. Il peut se contredire: il est donc un des principes d'explication universelle."

Bachelard

9. Lower Sepik and Highlands

"The mask is magic. Character is not innate; a man's character is his demon, his tutelar spirit; received in a dream. His character is his destiny, which is to act out his dream." *N.O. Brown*

"By personality we mean that each individual grows up by wearing a mask, by imitating one of his parents."

"The black fellows of Australia, the rudest savages we know, make themselves a temporary personality by the simple application of 'make-up' paint; and the mask is gone as quickly as it is made. Permanent masks, preserved as heirlooms, represent a deeper occupation of the individual by ghosts, a deeper investment of the present by the past; but the mask is worn only on ritual occasions." *N.O. Brown*

Representative

"The fact that primitives do not perceive with the same minds as ours, is that in the act of perception, they are not detached, as we are. Primitive participation, participation mystique, is self and not-self identified in the moment of experience. 'Primitive mentality' involves participation; an extra-sensory link between the recipient and the perceived; a telepathy which we have disowned." *N.O. Brown*

And I came into the fields and wide Palaces of memory – St. Augustine

"In one remote area I saw a tattooed, skinned, feathered, painted, armed audience, including one local beauty nursing a piglet, watch their first movie: one film was an interview with the British Foreign Secretary on the 1957 German Arms Treaty. Another dealt with the use of closed-circuit TV for traffic control in Sydney. I have no idea what these villagers thought of a film of elderly Australian ladies flying kites.

"But, in a deeper sense, it didn't matter. What mattered was that these media were changing the environment itself." *Edmund Carpenter*

Synchronizing the senses

"Sight has a natural bias toward detachment, creating the detached observer, whereas sound has an opposite bias: it surrounds, involves; one steps into it.

"Literate peoples experience sound as if it were visible: they listen to music. Non-literates merge with music. Far from being detached, they become involved participants, immersing themselves totally in it.

"Hearing with the eye. The eye focuses, pinpoints, abstracts, locating each object in physical space, against a background. In contrast, the ear accepts music from all directions simultaneously.

"The essential feature of sound is not its location, but that it be. We say, 'The night shall be filled with music', just as the air is filled with fragrance. We wrap ourselves in music.

"Acoustic space is not pictorial, boxed in, framed: it's resonating, in flux, creating its own dimensions moment by moment. It's a world in which the eye hears, the ear sees and all the five senses join in a concert of interweaving rhythms."

Edmund Carpenter



Masque—Wooden Mask

La notion du savoir est liée à l'art
de vivre et la notion du Bien à l'idée
de Beauté.

10. L'archipel Bismark

La Nouvelle-Irlande est une île proche de la Nouvelle-Guinée: elle a la forme d'un doigt. Les habitants pratiquent le commerce et toutes sortes d'échanges mais sans désir de profit. Ils pratiquent aussi la magie. Ils s'adonnent enfin à de nombreuses cérémonies sous le patronnage, en quelque sorte, d'une figure d'ancêtre appelée "malagan". Le "malagan" est le bon génie de ces peuples: on le craint, on l'aime et on l'admire: c'est un roi en même temps qu'un esprit.

La fête est la base de l'organisation sociale réglant les liens économiques et politiques dans un terrain vaste. On y échange des cochons et la monnaie de coquillage. On y rend visite en dansant et chantant. Elle requiert beaucoup de cochons et taros. Les danseurs doivent être payés. Mais celui qui donne la fête acquiert beaucoup de prestige; elle crée donc les "big men" des tribus.

Les objets, sculptures et masques, sont liés aux rites mortuaires qui se compliquent avec l'âge du mort. La fête a lieu quelques jours après l'enterrement. Mais les Malagans qu'on y fabrique, sont montrés aussi aux cérémonies des vivants telle la circoncision des garçons.

Le Chromosome

"Il y a deux divinités à chaque bout du monde. Le monde est polarisé à chaque bout du monde. Le monde est polarisé entre ces deux divinités, et chaque être est attiré vers l'une ou l'autre selon ce qu'il contient d'éléments de l'une ou de l'autre. L'une est hideuse et fait plaisir, l'autre délicate et remplit mon cœur d'amour."

Max Jacob, Ballades

Bons Sauvages

"La nudité des habitants semble protégée par le velours herbu des parois et la frange des palmes: ils se glissent hors de leurs demeures comme ils se dévêtiraient de géants peignoirs d'autruche. Joyaux de ces écrins duvetés, les corps possèdent des modelés affinés et des tonalités rehaussées par l'éclat des fards et des peintures, supports, dirait-on, destinés à mettre en valeur des ornements plus splendides: touches grasses et brillantes des dents et crocs d'animaux sauvages associées aux plumes et aux fleurs. Comme si une civilisation entière conspirait dans une même tendresse passionnée pour les formes, les substances et les couleurs.

"Nos modernes Marco Polo rapportent de ces mêmes terres, cette fois sous forme de photographies, de livres et de récits, les épices morales dont notre société éprouve un besoin plus aigu en se sentant sombrer dans l'ennui."

Lévi-Strauss

10. Bismark Sea Islands.

"Besides our eyes of flesh, there are eyes of fire that burn through the ordinariness of the world and perceive the wonders and terrors beyond. . . 'Primitive man,' Martin Buber observes, 'is a naive pansacramentalist. Everything is to him full of sacramental substance, everything. Each thing and each function is ever ready to light up into a sacrament for him'."

Theodore Roszak

"... we find a mystical psychology whose conception of human nature sides aesthetically and ethically with the non-intellective spontaneity of children and primitives, artists and lovers, those who can lose themselves gracefully in the splendor of the moment. *The childish feelings are important* (Goodman tells us, and puts the observation in italics) *not as a past that must be undone, but as some of the most beautiful powers of adult life that must be recovered: spontaneity, imagination, directness of awareness and manipulation.* . . 'Maturity', precisely among those who claim to be concerned with 'free personality', is conceived in the interest of an unnecessarily tight adjustment to a dubiously valuable workaday society, regimented to pay its debts and duties."

Theodore Roszak

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts;
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
And then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel,
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover, sighing like furnace, with a woe-ful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow.
Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloons,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
With youthful hose well sav'd a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
In second childishness, and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."
As you like it

Patrol Report – nomad, 24 March 1969

"Two women accused of sorcery were forcibly taken into the bush, bound to trees, and systematically beaten. They were left overnight, the plan being to return to them in the morning, beat them again, execute them with arrows, apportion their bodies and eat them – this being the traditional treatment of sorcerers. However, in the morning the women were released. Three of the four men on their own admission said that they would have liked to have killed the women but that they already held a 'Government Book' in the village and were frightened of what the government might do to them if they did kill the women. Having slept on it, they decided to let them go. . . . On this occasion, government influence through the image of the 'Book' no doubt saved the lives of the two women even when the Provisional Village Constable was no longer mindful of his position and obligations."

Edmund Carpenter

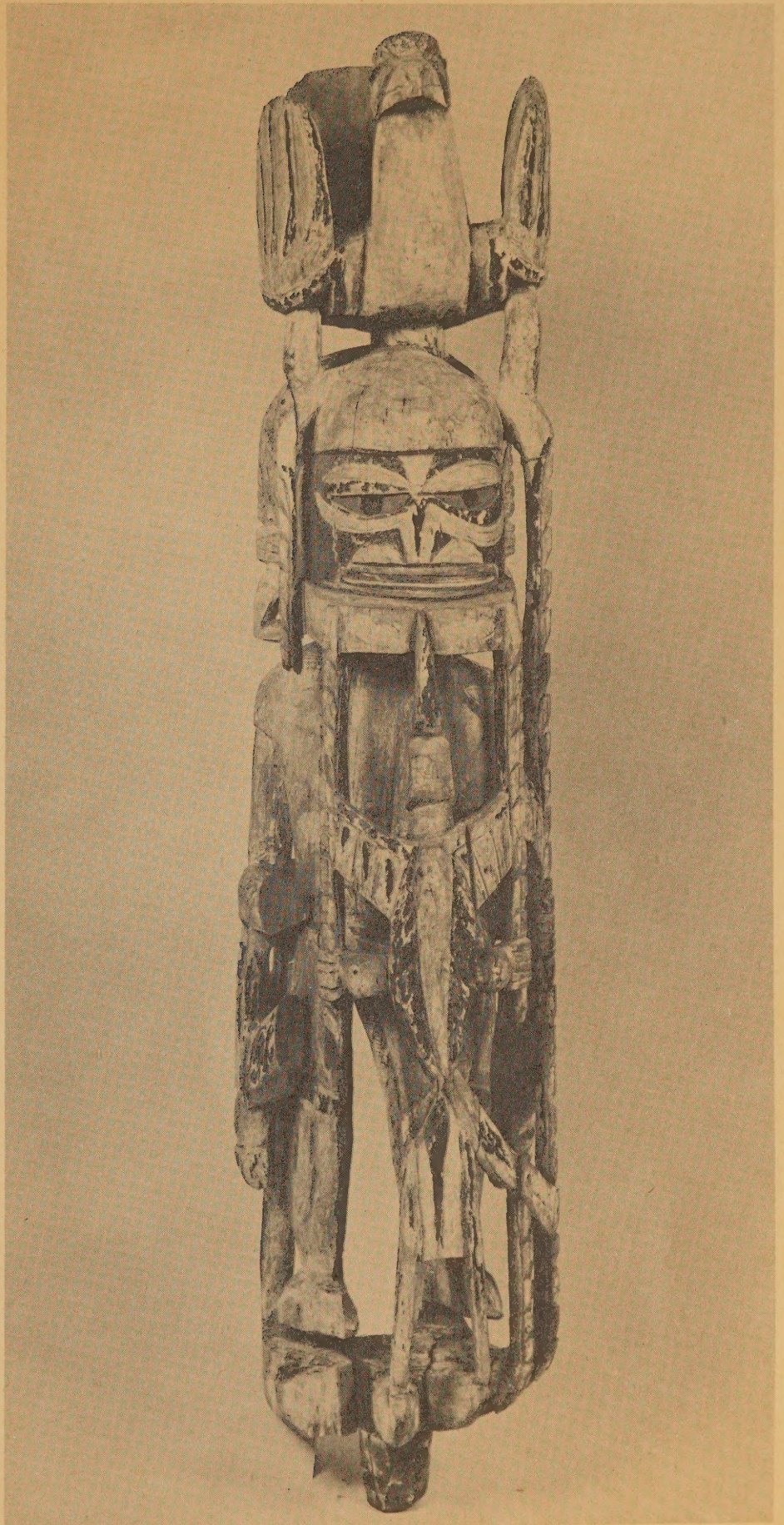


Figure d'ancêtre—Ancestor Figure

"Sur ma tête je porte couronne . . . Je m'appelle Malagan. Autour de moi, on se rassemble pour les grandes occasions; on fait échange d'écailles de cochon, on accueille des visiteurs venus de loin, on danse, on chante, Malagan . . . Malagan . . . Malagan . . ."

